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Immediate Release

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Environment Department Assists Six Water Systems With Compliance Issues; Ensures Safe Drinking Water Supplies for Customers

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) has terminated compliance orders against six New Mexico water systems. The systems had faced the enforcement actions for noncompliance with state water quality standards. Through NMED technical assistance, these systems have now returned to compliance with the state's health-based drinking water regulations.

"This is a real success story," said NMED Secretary Ron Curry. "In these cases, NMED staff was both vigilant in finding the water problems and helpful in solving them. This assistance directly improves the healthy water supplies of these communities."

Five of these water systems were in violation of the state's health standards for microbiological total coliform. These systems were **Buena Vista Mutual Domestic Water Consumers Association (MDWCA), Mora County; Country Cottage Care & Rehabilitation, Lea County; Indian Hills Water Company, Torrance County; Pie Town MDWCA, Catron County; and San Mateo MDWCA, Cibola County.** While it does not poses serious health threats by itself, Total coliform is an indicator that that other contaminants with more significant health effects are potentially present in the identified drinking water system.

The sixth water system, **Sierra Vista South Water Co-op in Bernalillo County,** violated health standards for the chemical contaminant di (2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP). This plastic byproduct has been found by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to potentially cause damage to the liver and testes as well as reproductive effects and cancer after chronic exposure.

NMED has not received reports of any health complaints due to these violations.

Once the problems were identified, state technical assistance providers helped analyze the water systems and recommend corrective actions needed to return these systems to compliance. This assistance is funded by a grant from the EPA.

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As a result of this assistance, all six systems took speedy action to correct the violations. No fines were levied against these systems for their violations.

“This is a perfect example of how NMED uses appropriate and fair enforcement along with technical aid to get results,” said Secretary Curry. “With NMED’s assistance, these small communities were able to put their resources toward solving their problems and protecting the health of their citizens from pollution.”

For further information contact Jon Goldstein, Communications Director, NMED at (505) 827-0314.

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